Accountability Report
2014–2015

Office of Aboriginal Affairs

NOVA SCOTIA

Accountability Statement

The accountability report of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs for the year ended March 31, 2015 is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Statement of Mandate for the fiscal year that just ended. The reporting of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Office of Aboriginal Affairs management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Office of Aboriginal Affairs 2014-2015 Statement of Mandate.

Premier Stephen McNeil
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

Julie Towers, Chief Executive Officer
Office of Aboriginal Affairs

Financial Results

Office of Aboriginal Affairs		
	2014 – 2015 Estimate	**2014 – 2015 Actual**
Program & Service Area	2,197,000	2,035,655
Administration (head office)	1,465,000	1,260,483
Total Gross Departmental Expenses	**3,662,000**	**3,296,138**
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	15.3	15.3

The difference between the Estimate and the Actual is $365,862. This can be explained as follows:

1. The CEO directed the return of $200,000 to Treasury Board based on a projected surplus, primarily attributable to salary savings as a result of vacant positions (two directors, one executive secretary).
2. Further decreases as a result of government-wide 1% spending reductions were achieved through operating efficiencies. OAA was able to meet budget reduction targets while maintaining the same level of corporate advice and support.
3. Increased recoveries from other departments as a result of successful leveraging of grant funding, and recoveries for the 2014 Learning Seminar.
4. Additionally, OAA saw a decrease in professional services fees, meeting expenses and miscellaneous office efficiencies. Also, in 2014-15 a major national event (4th National Aboriginal Women's Summit) came in under budget.

system and establish base measures. In June 2015, a Client Satisfaction Survey for the 2014-15 year was sent to key departmental contacts that OAA interacts with regularly, as well as to members of the Senior Officials Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Affairs. The results of this survey can be found in the supplemental information and appendices section of this report.

This report reflects the performance of OAA in a meaningful and direct way. The available measures and qualitative results are summarized below and address each of OAA's five strategic objectives, as outlined in the 2014-15 Statement of Mandate:

1. Collaborative and respectful Aboriginal and intergovernmental relations;
2. Effective coordination and strategic policy advice to Nova Scotia government;
3. Positive and productive relationship through Main Table negotiations with Canada and the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq;
4. Coordinated approach to ensure government meets its legal consultation obligations; and,
5. Enhanced public awareness and appreciation of Mi'kmaq and Aboriginal history and culture.

Summit's themes focused on Empowerment, Equity and Leadership, and involved inspiring keynotes and panel discussions focused on opportunities and solutions.

- OAA continued to work collaboratively with the NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women to advance one of the key outcomes of the August 2014 Council of the Federation Meeting with National Aboriginal Organization leaders: a commitment to support a national roundtable discussion on the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Discussion advanced during a meeting of NAO Leaders and P/T Ministers during NAWS IV in October, and subsequently the National Roundtable on Missing & Murdered Aboriginal Women was held in February 2015 in Ottawa. We continue to coordinate interdepartmental discussions as well as engage with Nova Scotian Mi'kmaq women's organizations and leaders to advance collaborative work and joint initiatives such as the sexual violence strategy.
- OAA remains engaged with the national Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG), and participated in meetings in April and November 2014. The AAWG continues to work towards three common goals:
  - Closing the graduation gap;
  - Closing the income gap; and
  - Ending violence against Aboriginal women & girls (co-chaired by Nova Scotia).
- OAA is also involved in the FPT Consultation Working Group and the Atlantic Canada Consultation Community of Practice as a means to ensure intergovernmental coordination and information sharing on Consultation practices.

Through these intergovernmental forums, OAA developed and represented provincial interests and support in areas of mutual interest between the Province and the Mi'kmaq. These processes brought the various partners to the table and through effective negotiations and collaboration has contributed to more positive long-term relationships.

In 2014-2015, various Provincial departments, in partnership with OAA, worked with Aboriginal communities and organizations to address a range of issues affecting Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw communities. For example:

- Natural Resources worked with OAA and the Mi'kmaq to develop the Mi'kmaw Forestry Initiative, which will see Mi'kmaw access to and management of parcels of crown land in the province. The agreement will be finalized in 2015.
- Economic and Rural Development and Tourism (ERDT) played an active role in supporting employment and community economic development opportunities for Mi'kmaw communities through the Aboriginal Community Development Fund.
- Health and Wellness worked with Aboriginal partners to increase First Nations' access to federal and provincial mental health and addiction services, to support the integration of Mi'kmaw language into the provincial mental health crisis line and to increase physical activity and recreation opportunities in Mi'kmaw communities.

- Providing ongoing advice and support to the First Nations gaming executive team (established by OAA, Communities, Culture and Heritage and the Nova Scotia Provincial Lotteries and Casino Commission) to work across government departments and with the Mi'kmaq to update First Nation Gaming Agreements with the 13 Mi'kmaq bands, respond to emerging issues, and explore governance options for future oversight and management of the file.
- Working with the Office of Planning & Priorities and the ONE NS Coalition to enhance Aboriginal / Mi'kmaq understanding and engagement, including specific advice on demographics, workforce participation and education.
- Coordinating and discussing how the federal legislation governing drinking water on reserve will be implemented and utilized by First Nations and what provincial strategy and approach is required.
- Establishing a Tax Working Group, involving several Mi'kmaq Chiefs, to more fully explore and discuss taxation issues and opportunities raised at the 5th Annual Assembly & Cabinet meeting, specifically point-of-sale rebates and exemptions.

During 2014-2015, OAA worked with a range of departments to provide clear and consistent advice on the development of a range of strategies and programs being led by other departments. Some examples include the Biodiversity Act, Mineral Resources Act, Children & Family Services Act amendments, and the aquaculture regulatory framework. We also continued to play a strategic coordination role in working with provincial and federal departments and programs to leverage funding contributions on important priority projects and initiatives to maximize public investments and outcomes.

Moving forward, OAA will continue to work with the Senior Officials Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Affairs to refine its corporate approach to guiding department and agency work on Aboriginal issues. OAA remains committed to bilateral and multi-departmental relationships on areas of interest and importance with respect to Aboriginal matters.

3. Positive and productive relationship through Main Table negotiations with Canada and the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq.

OAA represents the province in the Made-in-Nova Scotia Process, which has been in place since the signing of the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Framework Agreement in 2007. The purpose of the process is to address issues related to Mi'kmaq treaty and Aboriginal rights, including Aboriginal title, and Mi'kmaw governance. The Provincial goals for negotiations are enhanced clarity on Mi'kmaw rights, title and treaty-related issues; improved and stabile relations; and reduced social and economic disparity for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.

In 2014-2015 the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs, with the financial support of OAA, made important strides in identifying potential Mi'kmaq citizenship and beneficiary

supported by that community. To that end funding has been provided for Sipekne'katik to begin developing their own consultation process and to participate in ongoing consultations on specific projects and activities. OAA is also coordinating a number of consultations with Sipekne'katik and supporting departments through this interim period.

A significant achievement in 2014-2015 was the development of a new *Government of Nova Scotia Policy and Guidelines: Consultation with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia*. This updated policy incorporates current best practices and approaches in consultation in the province, and was developed with significant engagement of provincial departments and the Mi'kmaq. The policy was finalized late in the fiscal year, and formally released in April 2015. This new policy directly supports our strategic outcome that Provincial government employees and the public understand why government consults with the Mi'kmaq and how to conduct that consultation. OAA continues to work closely with line departments to develop and refine department-specific guidelines for consultation with the Mi'kmaq.

The Province is serious about meeting its duty to consult with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. In 2014-2015, the OAA advised Nova Scotia departments on more than 170 active consultations with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. These consultations focused on projects involving crown land authorizations, mineral permitting, environmental assessments, protected areas, archaeology, industrial approvals, highway twinning, bridge replacements, aquaculture leases, and oil and gas exploration. There were also consultations involving strategic and regulatory reviews as well as legislative reviews. OAA support these departments through consultation screening to advise them when to consult with the Mi'kmaq, and to assist with issue resolution and maintaining consultation records.

OAA leads, coordinates and facilitates a number of Consultation Tables and Technical Committees with KMKNO staff and line department staff which enable ongoing formal consultations, as well as opportunities to discuss more technical aspects of various projects involved in consultation:

1. Mining Consultation Table
2. Lands Consultation Table
3. Aquaculture Consultation Table
4. Aquaculture Technical Committee
5. KMKNO - Environment Technical Committee
6. Parks and Protected Areas Technical Advisory Committee
7. KMKNO – Communities Culture and Heritage Archaeology Working Group

OAA has had success in developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs and the Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn

Greater awareness of Mi'kmaq and Aboriginal culture and history provides a foundation for positive relations and support. OAA plays a leadership and coordination role across provincial government to ensure that departments have the tools and information they need to support greater internal and external awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal people in the province. OAA also supports provincial and municipal departments seeking advice and understanding of Aboriginal context and voluntary engagement with local groups on important projects, initiatives and efforts.

In addition, OAA coordinates and supports provincial engagement at public events and activities that promote and showcase Aboriginal and Mi'kmaq people and organizations. 2014-2015 was a significant year for Nova Scotia as the Province hosted three major Aboriginal events:

- In June, Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN) brought their annual Aboriginal Day Live & Celebration to the Halifax Waterfront. The festivities and concert were simulcast with the main stage and events in Winnipeg, Manitoba. OAA coordinated provincial support and participation in planning the event and welcoming the country to Halifax via the televised broadcast.
- In July, the Assembly of First Nations hosted their Annual General Assembly in Halifax, brining over 400 Chiefs and delegates from across the country together for important discussions. The province supported video production and cultural presentations for the event's feast to ensure that participants gained greater understanding of and appreciation for Mi'kmaq culture.
- In October, the Province co-hosted the 4th National Aboriginal Women's Summit in Membertou, along with the Native Women's Association of Canada, which brought over 200 delegates from across the country to Cape Breton. The event included cultural demonstrations and events to engage participants in understanding the spirit and culture of the Mi'kmaq and the richness of history in our province.

OAA continued to support the development of the Mi'kmaq History Month committee and programming for the annual awareness month, through strategic planning and capacity development to bolster the success of October's series of events and activities. OAA also is involved in planning the annual Treaty Day celebrations on October 1, including an awards ceremony that recognizes our Treaty relationship and celebrates achievements of Mi'kmaw youth and Elders.

OAA worked with the Public Service Commission to re-introduce training for public servants on Aboriginal context in Nova Scotia. The training is delivered by Wyatt White, Director of the Mi'kmaq Services Division with the department of Education & Early Childhood Development. This course is an important introduction for Nova Scotia government employees from across government to build their understanding of Aboriginal history, contemporary context and issues.

Supplemental Information and Appendices

On Monday, June 8, 2015 the Office of Aboriginal Affairs circulated a satisfaction survey for performance feedback. The survey was uploaded online and a link was provided to via email to to key provincial colleagues. The following are the results of the feedback received.

The Mission of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) is to 'lead Nova Scotia in Aboriginal Affairs by building mutual understanding, respect and a lasting relationship.' To achieve this, we provide a coordinated approach to negotiations and related discussions, Aboriginal and intergovernmental relations, policy analysis and strategic advice, and communication and education.

The Mandate of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs is to promote a coordinated approach within government on matters related to Aboriginal people, represent the interests of the Province in intergovernmental, multilateral initiatives and negotiations, and provide research, analysis and policy advice to government on Aboriginal issues.

Please indicate if the mission and mandate reflects your understanding of the role of OAA.

Chart 1.0: **Does the mission and mandate reflect your understanding of the role of OAA?**

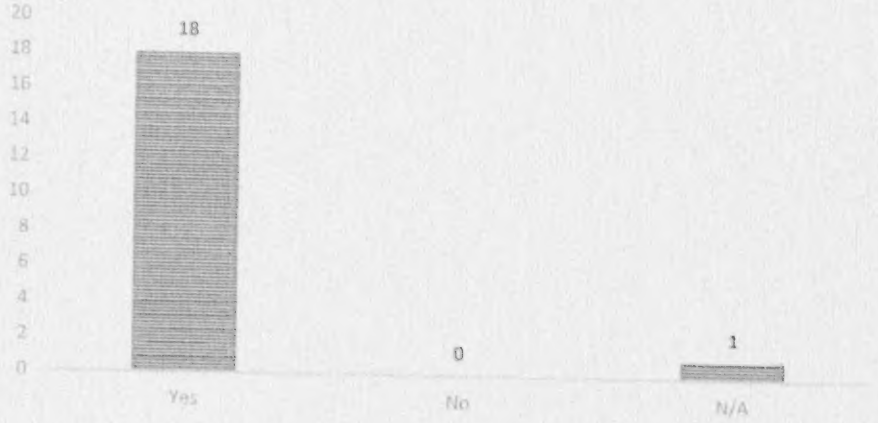
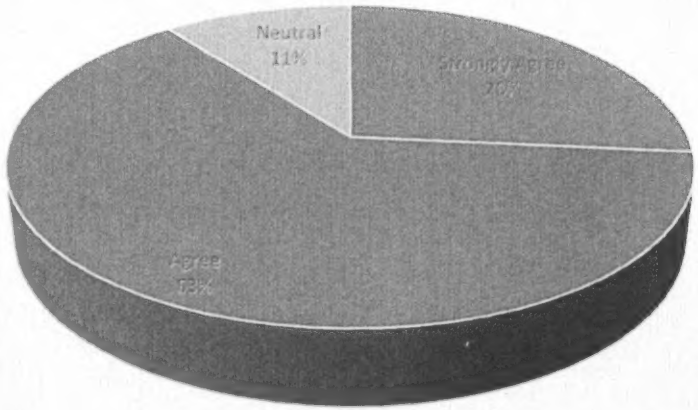
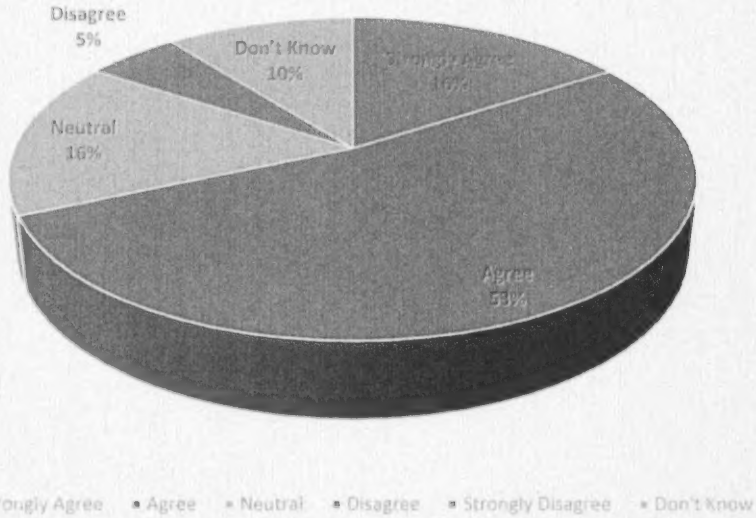


Chart 3.0: **OAA facilitates and supports effective coordination and strategic policy advice to the Nova Scotia government**



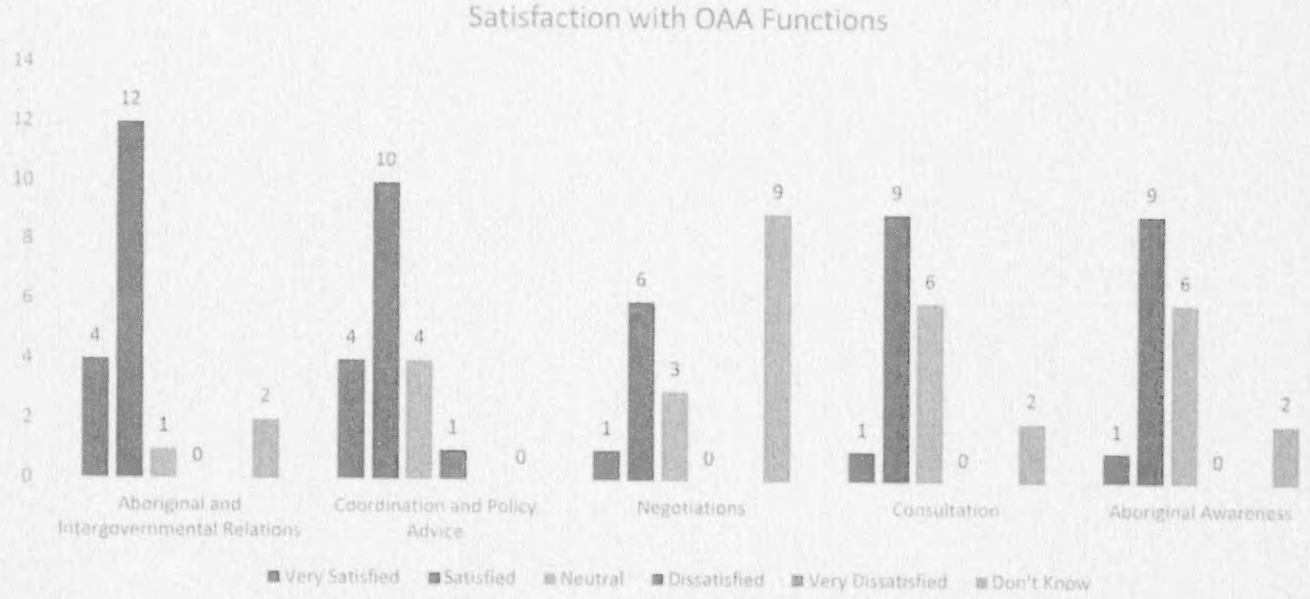
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Response Total
OAA facilitates and supports effective coordination and strategic policy advice to the Nova Scotia government	5	12	2	0	0	0	19

Chart 5: **OAA supports a coordinated approach to consultation to ensure government meets its legal obligations**



	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Response Total
OAA supports a coordinated approach to consultation to ensure government meets its legal obligations	3	10	3	1	0	2	19

Chart 7: **Based on your experience with OAA, how satisfied are you with the functions provided by OAA? If the statement presented does not relate to the area(s) of involvement with OAA, please indicate 'No Opinion'.**



	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know/No Opinion
Aboriginal & intergovernmental relations	4	12	1	0	0	2
Coordination and Policy Advice	4	10	4	1	0	0
Negotiations	1	6	3	0	0	9
Consultations	3	11	3	0	0	2
Aboriginal Awareness and Education	1	9	6	0	0	2